

GEORGE
HOUSE TRUST
HIV POSITIVE LIVING

Counselling



Communi
Connections

Meet & Gre

Volunteer Strategy

2020-23

Group
Events
Support

Driver

Raising HIV
Awareness
Volunteer

Pride
Support


World AIDS Day
Volunteer

better
together

peer Me

This volunteer strategy for 2020-2023 demonstrates how we aim to continue as a successful volunteer-involving organisation by setting out the direction of the work of the George House Trust volunteer programme.

We want to ensure that we have a range of roles that are attractive to prospective volunteers, that our volunteer team feels valued and that volunteers get the most from their experience at George House Trust.

This strategy sets out how we will recruit, support, manage and retain volunteers over the next three years.

Rachel Purvis
Volunteer Co-ordinator



Our Vision

George House Trust's vision is for all people living with HIV in the North West to lead healthy lives free from stigma and discrimination. We want everyone to know their HIV status and to be HIV aware.

Volunteers play an integral role in supporting George House Trust to work towards this vision.

We are committed to involving volunteers safely, responsibly and effectively and to recognising and celebrating the contribution that volunteers make.

We strive to involve a diverse range of volunteers and to offer a variety of volunteer roles that reflect the needs of the organisation, whilst also providing opportunities for volunteers to share and develop a range of skills, knowledge and experience.

Where we came from...

Volunteers have been part of the fabric of George House Trust since it was founded in 1985. Our origins lie in the campaigning work of six gay men who set up a telephone helpline in Manchester in response to the city's first HIV diagnoses.

In those early days, a diagnosis of HIV meant, inevitably, severely limited life expectancy but, in the 35 years since the founding of George House Trust, advancements in medication have meant that people diagnosed early with HIV and adhering to medication can expect a near normal life span. HIV is now a treatable and manageable medical condition.

The diversity of services provided for people living with HIV has, of necessity, changed and grown along with our volunteer team.

From those six volunteers who responded in the early days of the epidemic, our volunteer base now stands at 83 across 15 regular roles.

Without this volunteer support we could not deliver the number of services we do today.

Where we are now

At George House Trust we pride ourselves on volunteers being involved with the organisation at every level. We have a highly-skilled volunteer team with some volunteers carrying out dual roles.

Volunteers are integral to helping us provide good quality support and services to people living with HIV in the North West.

In April 2019 we launched our volunteer experience survey and continued to survey volunteers across the year during volunteer team meetings and finally at the winter celebration event in December 2019.

Spreading the survey across the year was intended to help ensure a good level of participation, seek focussed responses to areas of the volunteer programme and ensure new volunteers were also able to provide feedback.

“

I was reading about some vulnerable people who are not getting any help during the crisis, and I'm so pleased I can do something small for my Buddy and for the charity.

- Melissa

”

Volunteer Experience Survey 2019/20

83

Number of
volunteers surveyed



Length of time volunteering

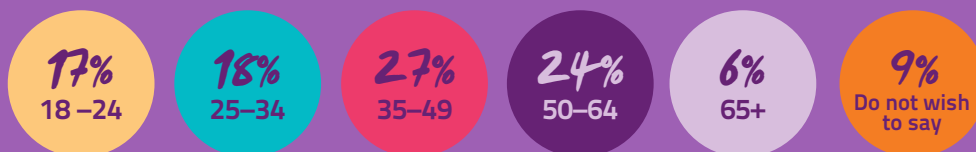
1 in 4

of our volunteers have
been volunteering for at
least three years

In 2019/20 we increased our
numbers of volunteers by

34%

Age of volunteers



Volunteer roles and numbers

Volunteer Role	Number of Volunteers
Awareness Raising	30
Admin Support	3
Advice Support	3
Community Connections	10
Prison Support	1
Counselling	3
Courses, Sessions and Events	14
Drivers	6
Food Parcels	4
Peer Mentors	17
Meet and Greet	17
Positive Speaking	10
Community Fundraising Support	1
Events and Communications	2
Volunteer Programme Support	1

49%

Volunteers living
with HIV

45%

Volunteers with
multiple roles

From the survey

Top 3 reasons

for getting involved
in volunteering at
George House Trust

- I want to make a difference to society / help people
- the cause (HIV) is really important to me
- the organisation is really important to me

Top 5 skills

gained by
George House Trust
volunteers

- the ability to support people living with HIV
- knowledge and understanding of HIV
- the ability to challenge HIV stigma
- the ability to lead or encourage others
- confidence in talking to groups

Top 5 ways

in which volunteering at
George House Trust
impacts on a
personal level

- creates a sense of making a useful contribution
- instils a willingness to try new things
- gives a new sense of motivation
- improves self-esteem
- raises awareness of the effects of their own actions on others

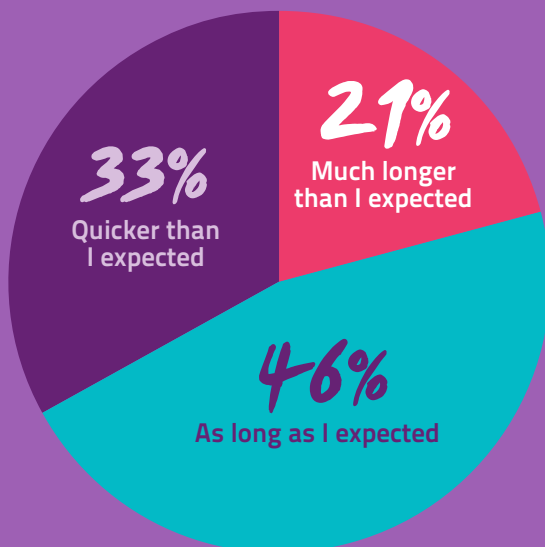
Top 5 reasons

why people continue
to volunteer at
George House Trust

- to make a difference to people's lives / HIV awareness raising
- believing in the cause
- to maintain relationships with the people they volunteer with
- to be part of an organisation
- to gain a range of skills and experience

Other findings

*Length of time it took
to become a volunteer*



The majority of volunteers...

- found out about volunteering through the George House Trust website
- said that it was easy and straight forward to become a volunteer
- strongly agreed that what they learnt during the George House Trust volunteer induction had been helpful to their role
- strongly agreed that the induction prepared them for their role and that it was of good quality
- understood how to raise an issue, for example no longer wanting to continue with their role or having a change in personal circumstance that would impact on their volunteering
- felt supported in their volunteer role

“

Volunteering at George House Trust has improved my confidence as well as reminding me how much we have in common regardless of our HIV status. Volunteering has also enabled me to develop my existing personal, social and professional skills, and has helped me discover skills I did not know I had.

- Marcelino

”

Some key learning points

- Our volunteer team does not properly reflect the diversity of communities living with HIV nationally. Only 13% of our volunteers are African.
- A number of volunteers had to wait longer than we would have liked – some more than 6 weeks – to become a volunteer.
- 40% of volunteers said that they had not had one-to-one support with the Volunteer Co-ordinator.
- We need to ensure as many volunteers as possible who express an interest in another role, have the opportunity to carry out multiple roles.
- Although retention of volunteers is good – beyond two years for many – we would still like to increase this number.

As a result of these findings we are committed to demonstrating how we will improve our work practices to ensure we continue to provide excellence in volunteer management.



“

Volunteering at George House Trust has been great, I get the support I need to complete tasks. I have enjoyed the experience, it has empowered me and I have gained more confidence in public speaking. It is a warm and rewarding environment to work in.

- Gillian

”

Our plan for the future

5 goals to ensure Volunteer Excellence

Over the next three years we will work towards achieving the following 5 goals to ensure Volunteer Excellence. We will:

1

Develop new and exciting volunteer opportunities which attract a diverse range of volunteers.

2

Establish a robust recruitment process that reaches communities reflective of the demographic of service users and the general population of people living with HIV in the UK.

3

Ensure that George House Trust volunteers enjoy an enriching volunteer experience and benefit from learning and development support.

4

Ensure a high rate of volunteer retention.

5

Demonstrate a commitment to evaluation and improvement for the George House Trust volunteer programme.

Goal 1

Develop new and exciting volunteer opportunities which attract a diverse range of volunteers.

We commit to:

- A whole team approach to volunteering with all staff members committed to identifying areas of their work in which volunteers might support the work they do and liaising with the Volunteer Co-ordinator to create a robust role description for identified new roles.
- Working in a SMART way to ensure role descriptions are specific and measurable, that results and outcomes are achievable, relevant and time-bound.
- Making our volunteer roles motivating by ensuring that potential roles identified are attractive to volunteers and ensuring the following; ownership, the authority to think, responsibility for results and the ability to measure success.
- Inspiring people to become involved with flexible and accessible opportunities that suit different time commitments, motivations, interests, skills and experience.
- Utilising the range of skills and expertise our volunteers bring to their roles by delivering activities that benefit people living with HIV.
- Increasing the involvement of current active volunteers by developing new and exciting ways to support the work of George House Trust.

Our benchmarks for success will be:

- Evidence that new roles have been created and successfully recruited to.
- Recruiting a more diverse volunteer team.
- Increasing the number of volunteers in multiple roles.
- Identifying new volunteer roles in response to the skills and experience volunteers bring.
- People living with HIV reporting feeling more supported as a result of services which are being delivered and supported by volunteers.
- Evidence of excellent volunteer retention in new roles.



Fundraising with George House Trust is fun, enjoyable, and worthwhile. An absolute pleasure to break away from something that isn't day to day work and raise money for a good cause. The biggest shock for me was how little the public had knowledge on HIV, this encouraged me to be more approachable and engaging with delivering awareness on HIV.

- James

Goal 2

Establish a robust recruitment process that reaches communities reflective of the demographic of George House Trust service users and the general population of people living with HIV in the UK.

We commit to:

- Creating more volunteer roles, giving more people the opportunity to develop skills.
- Working with partner organisations, stakeholders and community groups to attract people from different backgrounds to the volunteer programme.
- Inviting existing volunteers from diverse backgrounds to help develop a fresh approach to recruiting new volunteers.
- Reducing reliance on digital volunteer recruitment strategies by ensuring that leaflets publicising volunteering opportunities are available in local community settings.
- Reviewing messaging and images used on recruitment materials and tailoring these to ensure a diversity of imagery.
- Reviewing volunteer application forms to ensure equal access to the application process for people from diverse backgrounds or for whom English is not their first language.
- Identifying any barriers to the volunteer application process for people recently settled in the UK – for example references – and finding workable solutions.
- Ensuring that the time between registering an interest in volunteering and becoming an active volunteer is no longer than four weeks.
- Ensuring that pages on the George House Trust website relevant to volunteering and the volunteer application process are user friendly and easy to navigate.

Our benchmarks for success will be:

- A more diverse volunteer team with an increased number of black African volunteers.
- New volunteers recruited within 4 weeks.
- Increased involvement, where necessary, of volunteers in the volunteer recruitment process.
- Completion of a review of volunteer recruitment forms, leaflets and the George House Trust website volunteering pages which results in changes which reflect people from a diverse range of backgrounds.



Throughout my 25 years as a volunteer I have always felt that my contribution as a volunteer at George House Trust has been appreciated and found that the staff are very supportive of the volunteers.

- Jim



Goal 3

Ensure that George House Trust volunteers enjoy an enriching volunteer experience and benefit from learning and development support.

We commit to:

- Ensuring that volunteers know how to access one-to-one supervision with the Volunteer Co-ordinator.
- Using one to one supervision sessions as an opportunity to revisit the volunteer's motivation for volunteering.
- Providing all new volunteers with a relevant, interactive and inclusive initial George House Trust volunteer induction course.
- Providing at least one update training course for existing volunteers each year in response to survey results.
- Delivering quarterly volunteer team meetings to provide support to each of the volunteer teams and ensuring that during the meetings there is space to meet training needs and gain feedback from volunteers about their experiences.
- Improving volunteer communication by creating and distributing a monthly newsletter keeping volunteers up-to-date with any new roles and acknowledging the valuable contribution volunteers make to George House Trust's Mission, Vision and Values.
- Ensuring that volunteer records are kept up to date so we can reach out to the right people when volunteering opportunities arise.

Our benchmarks for success will be:

- Volunteers reporting feeling supported.
- Increased numbers of volunteers reporting that they know how to access supervision from the volunteer co-ordinator.
- More volunteers fulfilling multiple roles.
- A comprehensive and up to date database reflective of volunteer activity, roles and status.
- Excellent attendance figures for volunteer training events throughout the year.
- Evidence of a streamlined and personalised volunteer recruitment process.



One of the benefits of volunteering is the new experiences and friendships that develop. I feel a sense of pride when I am wearing my George House Trust t-shirt. People seem to instantly have trust in you, and sometimes see an opportunity to share some of their concerns, for themselves, friends or family members.

- Stephen



Goal 4

Ensure a high rate of volunteer retention.

We commit to:

- Utilising the 'volunteer update' section in George House Trust's full staff team meetings to celebrate the achievements of volunteers.
- Organising a minimum of two volunteer social events per year.
- Organising a volunteer recognition event once per year.
- Effectively supporting staff who have volunteer management responsibilities to recognise and reward volunteers in their team.

Our benchmarks for success will be:

- Evidencing increased numbers of volunteers staying with the organisation beyond one year.
- Bringing together a collection of positive volunteer stories to share on social media, within impact reports and on the George House Trust website.
- Thanking volunteers by recognising individual and collective achievements at a recognition event.
- Proactively achieve volunteer recognition at a local and national level when opportunities arise.



Through volunteering I've been able to make a tremendous difference to the lives of people, families and professionals. I have learned so much and grown in confidence at so many levels. I love the lessons I've learned through the people I've meet. Every person living with HIV should be able to smile the way I do, inside and out. I live my life more confidently.

- Yvonne

Goal 5

Demonstrate a commitment to evaluation and improvement for the George House Trust volunteer programme.

We commit to:

- Gathering feedback after volunteer training, team meetings and events in order to gain a good understanding of the volunteer experience and to inform future activity planning.
- Conducting an annual Volunteer Satisfaction Survey in order to gain feedback on the volunteer programme.
- Investing in renewing our Investors in Volunteering accreditation to demonstrate our commitment to being a volunteer-involving organisation.

Our benchmarks for success will be:

- Achieving Investors in Volunteering accreditation.
- Demonstrating to volunteers how their feedback from the Volunteer Satisfaction survey has been implemented.
- Demonstrating to volunteers how the volunteer programme has adapted and changed in response to feedback.



“ My year at George House Trust has been beyond fabulous. I feel privileged to work alongside some of the best people within the charity sector and to have been given the opportunity to support the organisation with events and fundraising as the Events & Communications Volunteer. It’s enabled that inner activist within me that always felt as if I should be doing more for a good cause. ”

– Sam

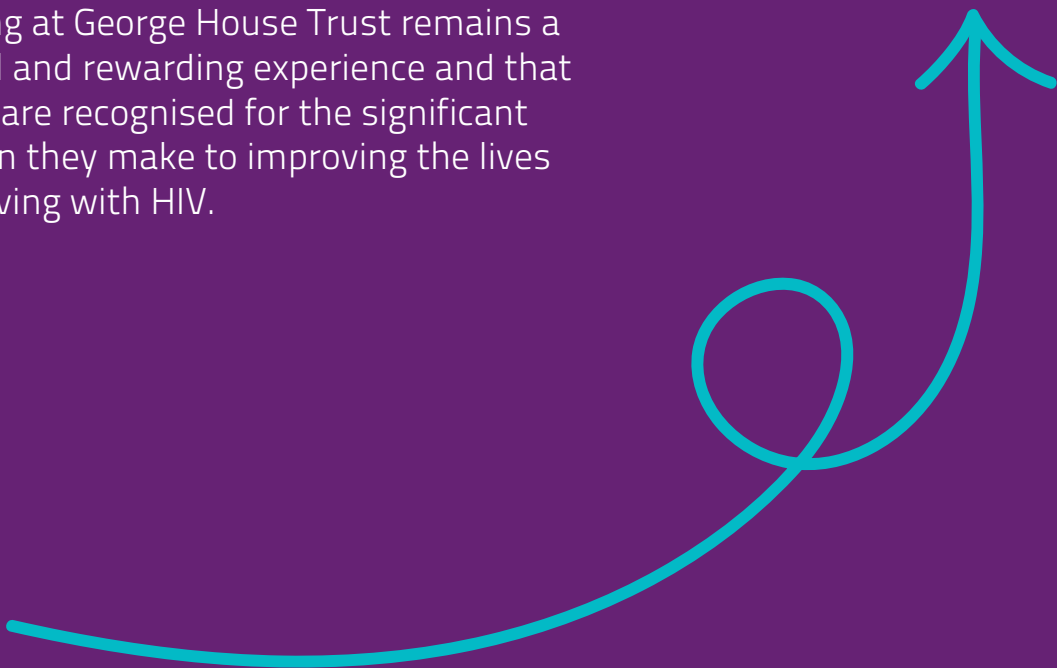
Conclusion

We have set out 5 goals to ensure that we maintain excellence in volunteer management.

We commit to regularly reviewing this strategy in line with our organisational values throughout the next three years.

We will measure the success of our volunteer programme through regular monitoring and we will record data which allows us to properly assess the impact of our goals.

With this strategic approach to volunteer management we aim to ensure that volunteering at George House Trust remains a meaningful and rewarding experience and that volunteers are recognised for the significant contribution they make to improving the lives of people living with HIV.



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